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RUEHLZ RUEHPW RUEHROV RUEHVK RUEHYG
DE RUEHAH #1072/01 2771304
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 041304Z OCT 07
FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9489
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE
RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0658
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 0534
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 2837
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 1110
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RHMFIUU/CDR USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ASHGABAT 001072

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN, SCA/PPD, M/A/OS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASCH](#) [KPAO](#) [TX](#)

SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: ASHGABAT INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL FEATURED ON
STATE TELEVISION - IS REGISTRATION NEXT?

REF: A) ASHGABAT 1042, B) ASHGABAT 1067

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11. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for public Internet.

12. (SBU) SUMMARY: State Television channel "TV4" October 3 ran a positive feature on Ashgabat International School that highlighted the school's American curriculum and international staff and students. In his interview, the school director drew a clear link between Turkmenistan's desire to attract foreign business and the need for an expanded international school for the associated expatriate community. Almost all content in state media is directed by or approved at high government levels. In recent months, the government has used state media coverage to prepare the public for pending decisions. We hope the same is true for QSI registration. We will continue to press for Ashgabat international School's registration. END SUMMARY.

13. (SBU) On October 3, State Television Channel "TV4" broadcast an eleven minute segment on Ashgabat International School, operated by Quality Schools International (QSI), which will occasionally be repeated for several days. This is perhaps the first education-themed broadcast which has no connection to government schools or the President's reform program. The broadcast portrayed the Ashgabat International School in a positive light; emphasized the American curriculum, international teaching staff, and students; and included interviews with the school director and two teachers. Video featured pupils of all ages engaged in classroom activities, as well as the library and computer facilities. Noticeably absent was the building exterior. (NOTE: The school building is constructed of nicely finished, joined trailers, which do not fit in with State TV's usual presentation of gleaming white marble buildings and fountains. END NOTE.)

14. (SBU) QSI's Ashgabat school has never been registered by the host government, and as a result, cannot get legal permission to

expand its facilities legally. This long-standing denial of registration has been a frequent issue raised by the Charge and visiting delegations, who emphasize the school's role in attracting international business staff as well as Turkmenistan's overall opening to the world and reaching international standards. We've heard a phone call from President Berdimuhamedov's UNGA delegation to TV4 directed the station to do a short TV feature on the school (reftel A).

MOSTLY "ON MESSAGE"

15. (SBU) The TV report included minor inaccuracies consistent with normal state media "spin," such as stating that Turkmen language and history are students' favorite subjects. Lengthy interviews, particularly with school director Brad Goth, touched on long-standing problems between QSI and the government, but with a positive tone. (NOTE: PAO advised Mr. Goth on interview strategy. END NOTE.) Mr. Goth described a clear link between Turkmenistan's desire to attract foreign business and the need for an expanded international school for the associated expatriate community. Drawing attention to the network of QSI schools worldwide, Goth noted that the excellent facilities enjoyed in other locations should be made available to Ashgabat International School. He also expressed his optimism about working with the government for future expansion of the school and therefore meeting Turkmenistan's needs. Unfortunately, the translation of this statement implied that he hoped QSI would meet Turkmenistan's "standards."

16. (SBU) COMMENT: The positive State TV report on QSI in Ashgabat is a significant and encouraging signal. Almost all content in state media is directed by or approved at high government levels. In recent months, the government has used state media coverage to prepare the public for pending decisions. We hope the same is true for QSI registration. We will continue to press for Ashgabat International School's registration.

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